

THE
EXPEDITION TO THE
ARCTIC OCEAN

VOLUME TWO, PART 1





REPORT OF A COMMITTEE



*Northwest
Collection*

REPORT OF A COMMITTEE

OF THE

Edmonton Board of Trade

On the Transportation Facilities in existence at the present time (1908) to the Peace, Finlay, and MacKenzie River Basins from Edmonton.

This report gives in detail mode of travel, distance in miles, passenger tariff, freight tariff, and time table from Edmonton to the following points:

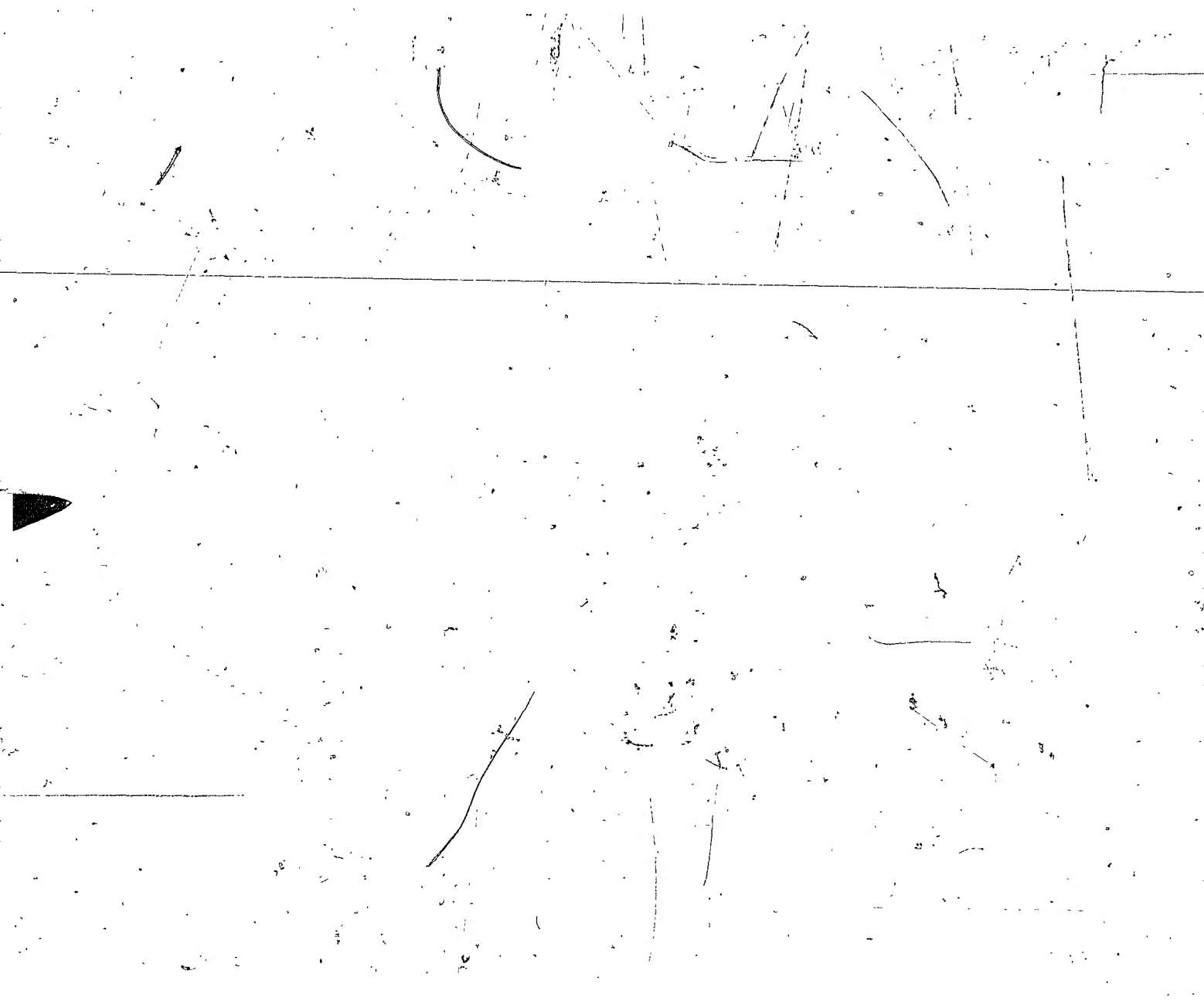
Athabasca Landing
Lesser Slave Lake
Peace River Crossing
Dunvegan
Ft. St. Johns
Hudson's Hope
Ft. Grahame

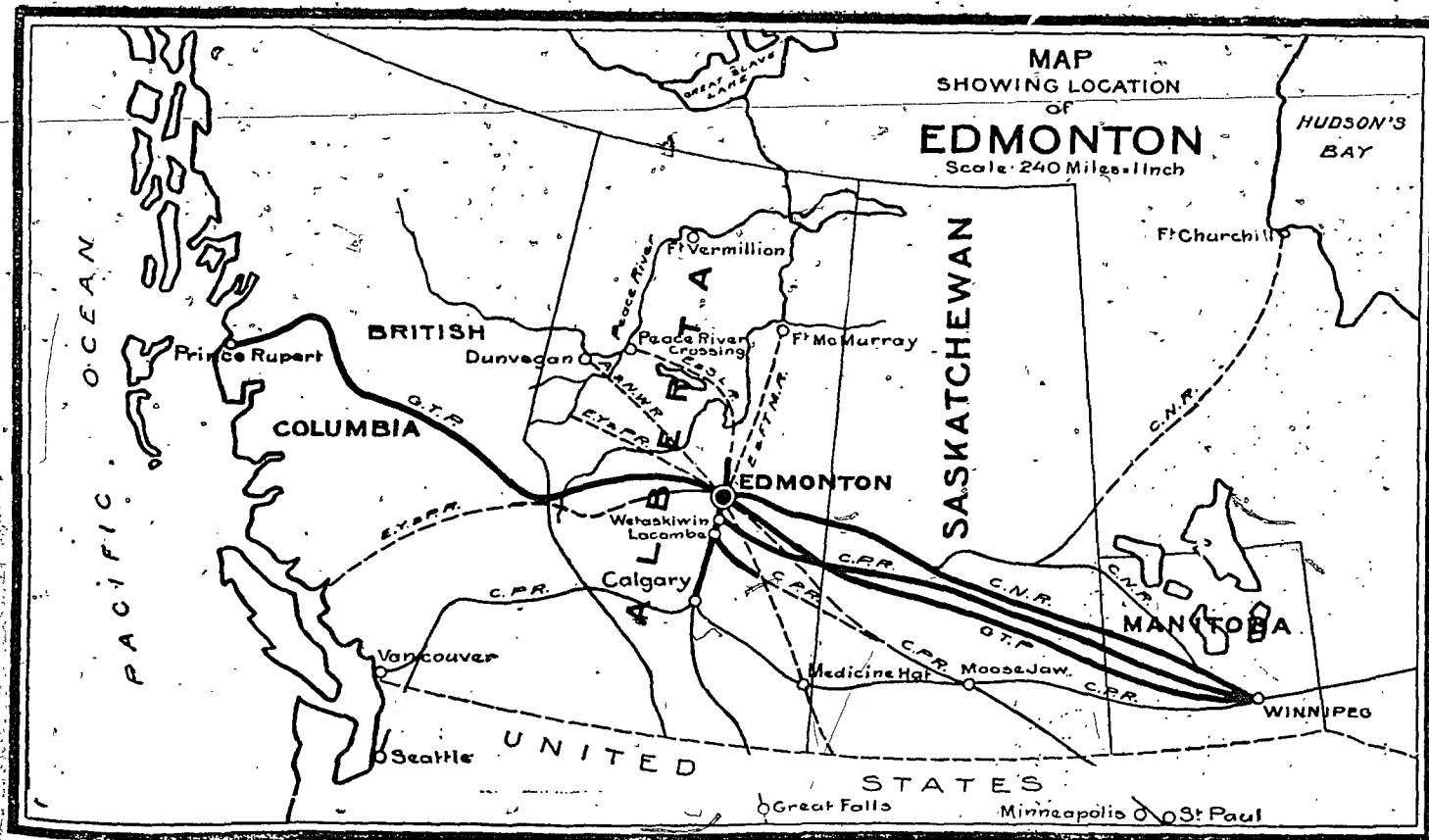
Finlay River
Ft. McMurray
Ft. Chipewyan
Ft. Vermillion
Ft. Smith
Fort Resolution
Ft. Rae

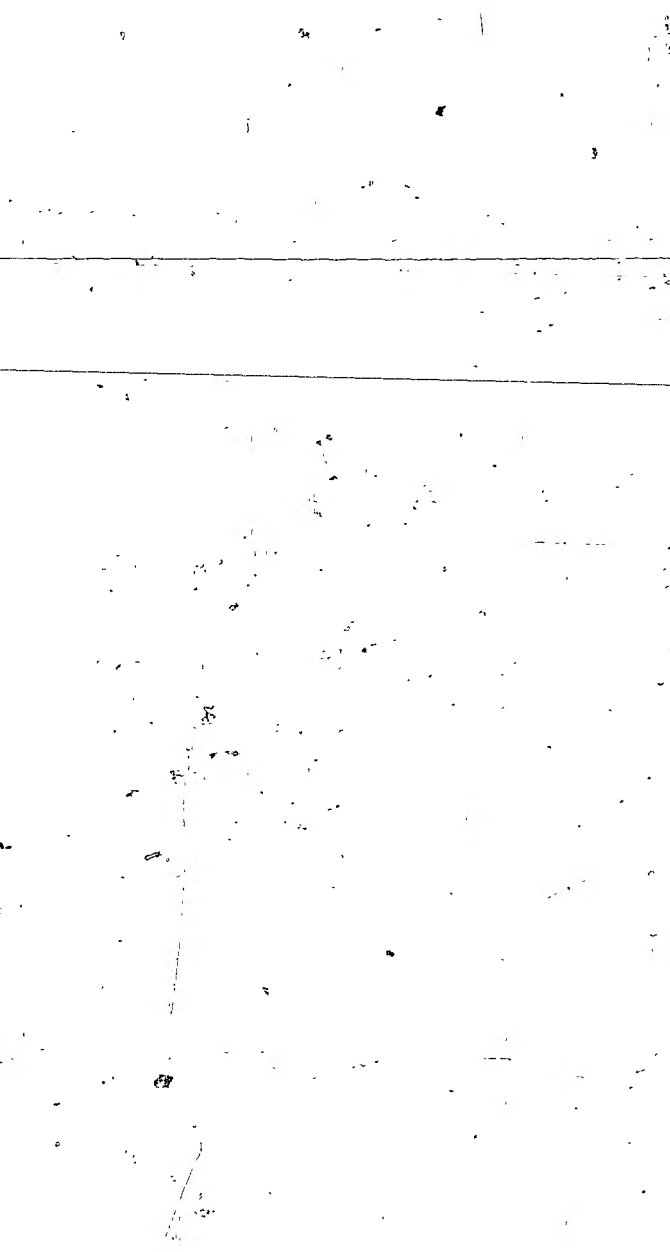
Ft. Providence
Ft. Simpson
Ft. Wrigley
Ft. Norman
Ft. Good Hope
Ft. McPherson

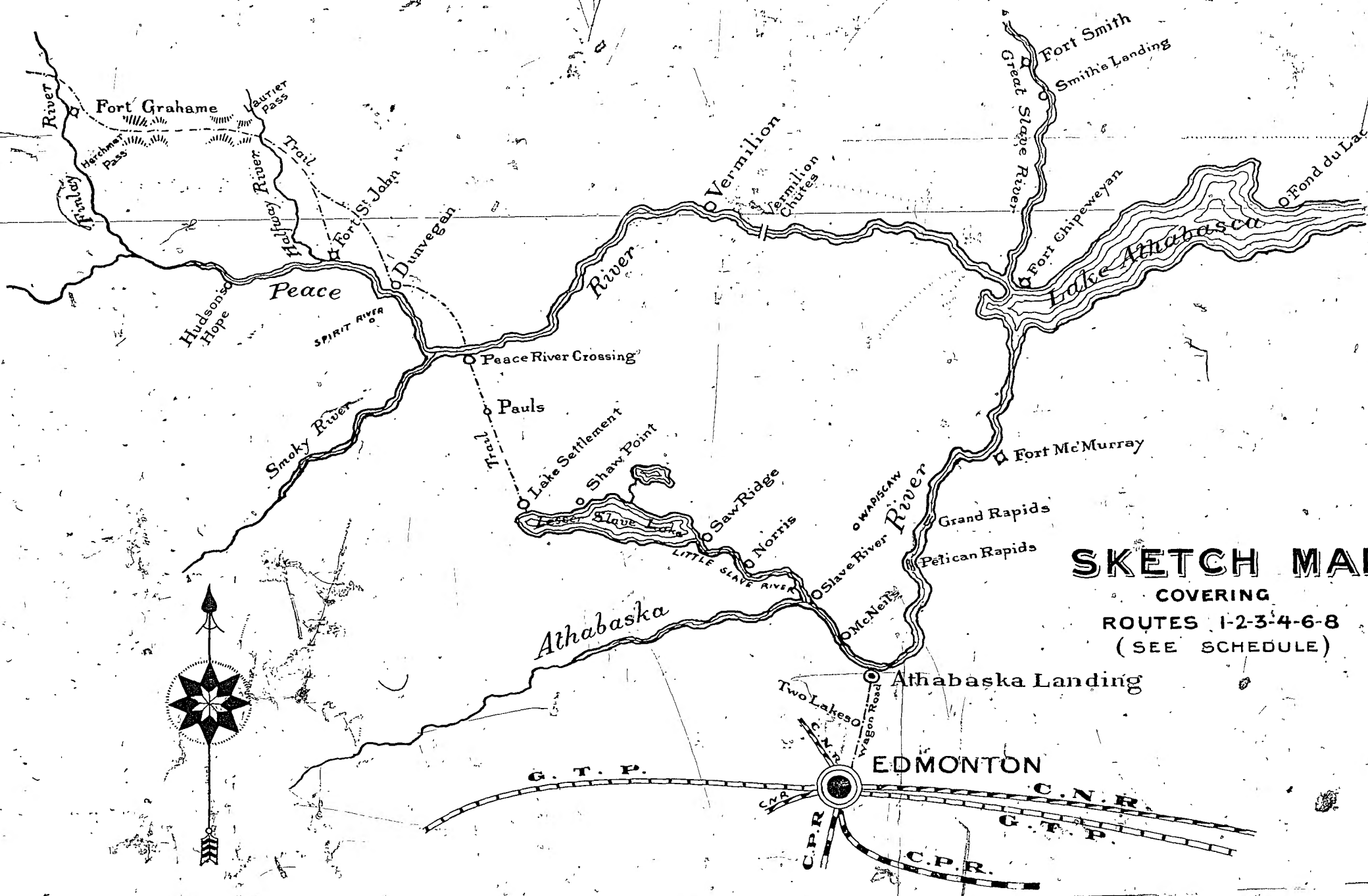
To the hunter, prospector, trader and trapper, and for men of wealth seeking new fields to travel in, the vast country to the north of Edmonton offers untold opportunities in the way of business as well as pleasure. The hunting, the fishing, the shooting of rapids, the magnificent scenery, large lakes and magnificent rivers, the huge tar beds, salt beds, coal beds, etc., offer to men of wealth a novel trip in a delightful and invigorating climate, equal, if not superior to anything that India, South Africa, Australia or South America has to offer. For men of experience in exploring new countries, and roughing it, a trip through the country which stretches 2000 miles to the north of Edmonton would be one that could be taken in the summer months with safety, with the aid of the Northern Transportation Company and The Hudson's Bay Company.

For further information write Secretary Edmonton Board of Trade, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada









SKETCH MAP

COVERING

ROUTES 1-2-3-4-6-8

(SEE SCHEDULE)



ARCTIC
OCEAN

Herschel
Fort McPherson

Fort Good Hope

Dawson City

Peel River

River

Fort Norman

Fort Simpson

Laird River

Fort Laird

Mackenzie

Fort Providence

Fort Rae

Hay River

Vermilion

Chutes

Peace River

Fort Resolution

Fort Smith

Smith's Landing

Fort Chipewyan

Fond du Lac

Athabasca

River

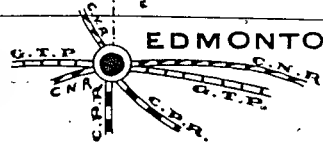
Fort McMurray

Grand Rapids

Pelican Rapids

Athabasca Landing

EDMONTON





REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE of Edmonton Board of Trade on Transportation Facilities to the North; with especial reference to the route to the Alleged Gold Fields on the Finlay River.

A SCHEDULE has been drawn up showing in tabular form the various routes distinguished by numbers, the mode of travel, distances with intermediate points, passenger tariffs, freight tariffs, time tables, seasons, sleeping accommodation, meals, and such other information as might be wanted. This schedule is intended to cover all the organized routes to the north country and gives the facts as nearly as they could be ascertained. The times and rates given are for normal conditions. On the land routes, when the roads are exceptionally bad freight rates rise and traffic lags. The sailing dates of the river steamers are only approximate and are so marked in the schedule. Allowance should always be made for delays en route. With these stipulations the schedule is offered as being fairly reliable. It has been passed upon by those in authority in respect of the means of travel.

A second schedule gives the Government mail service throughout the same territory, the times of despatch and receipt of mails, post offices, distances, mode of conveyance, etc.

Some general advice is offered to those who may be inexperienced in such travelling. Short notes are added on the various places with reference to their equipment for supplying a traveller's needs. The route to the Finlay river is then described a little more in detail, quoting especially the report of the R.N.W.M.P. Commissioner on the trail from Fort St. Johns to Fort Grahame.

Your committee would respectfully urge on the board to continue their efforts to secure improvements in the means of transportation throughout the north country. Edmonton holds a commanding position as the gateway to this vast region, but that advantage carries with it the responsibility of taking effective charge of its development.

Anyone travelling light for the sake of the trip only, and no more interesting journey could be made, can pick his routes and time from the accompanying schedule. To make connections between routes due allowances must be made for possible delays. Apart from ease and speed of travel he can go at any time in the twelve months. On the other hand the prospector or settler who is to pack his staff beyond the limits of other conveyance is much more restricted in his choice of times. He cannot move until there is feed and must arrive, if away from settlements, in time to put up hay to feed his stock through the winter. The regular program for the prospector in the back country is to follow his calling in the summer and then trap in the winter. The sale of his furs provides him with provisions for the next summer's prospecting, and so he goes on independently until his strike is made.

In any case those without previous experience cannot be too strongly urged to get information, advice and guidance from those who do know the conditions. Right in Edmonton reliable pointers on all parts of the north country can be obtained. An absolutely green party cannot be advised to attempt any journey much beyond the regularly organized transport.

OUTFITTING:

Commercial stocks are carried at many points in the north at which an emergency want can be supplied; but the whole question of outfitting should be considered before leaving Edmonton. The quantities of goods at outposts are more or less closely calculated for the regular demand of their district and might prove insufficient for heavy unexpected calls. In postponing purchase a man must be prepared to pay profit on freight also and the whole rate of profit is naturally higher in proportion to the risks of the trade and the virtual monopolies enjoyed. Parties contemplating a long trip or lengthy stay should equip themselves in Edmonton. Anyone travelling light may leave the matter—making careful enquiries along the road so as not to pass the last adequate base of supplies.

EDMONTON—

Reached by Canadian Pacific Railway, Canadian Northern Railway, or Grand Trunk Pacific Railway (building). This is the natural outfitting point as already stated.

ATHABASCA LANDING—

3 general stores and 2 large wholesale depots; 1 licensed hotel and several boarding houses; 2 large livery barns; blacksmith shops; sawmill; boat and scow building yards.

Post Office; Government Telegraph office; R.N. W.M.P. post; ferry across the Athabasca.

Automobiles have made the trip from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing in a favorable state of the road, taking only part of a day.

The government are making provision for extending the telegraph line to Lesser Slave Lake Settlement, Peace River Crossing, Dunvegan and Bear Lake on Grande Prairie.

MOUTH OF LESSER SLAVE RIVER—

Native settlement; scow for crossing Athabasca River; agent for Northern Transportation Company, Mr. Rennison.

SAW RIDGE—

At east end of Lesser Slave Lake.—Post Office and Store.

LESSER SLAVE LAKE SETTLEMENT—

Largest place north of Edmonton; Post Office; 2 general stores and wholesale depots; other smaller traders; 3 saw mills; flour mill; livery barns; several lodging houses, 3 restaurants; can buy horses, cattle, hay, oats, vegetables, butter, and other farm produce as well as store stuff; good outfitting point—naturally at higher prices than Edmonton.

Headquarters of division R.N.W.M.P.; Inspector Jennings in charge; English Church mission church and school; Roman Catholic mission church and school; government school district now being organized.

PEACE RIVER CROSSING—

Post Office; 2 general stores; livery barns; stopping place (J. P. Gaudette); 2 flour mills; sawmill; can buy horses, cattle, hay, oats and vegetables, as well as store stuffs.

English church mission church and school; Roman Catholic mission church and school.

VERMILION—

Post Office; 2 general stores; 3 flour mills; 3 saw mills; good farm produce; locally cured bacon; lard, etc.

English church mission church and school, Roman Catholic mission church and school.

DUNVEGAN—

Two general stores; Roman Catholic mission church. A good point for securing pack ponies.

SPIRIT RIVER (fifteen miles south of Dunvegan)—

Post Office; 2 general stores; centre of farming community. English church mission church and school; Roman Catholic mission church and school.

FORT ST. JOHNS—

Two general stores; most important trading post on upper Peace River; Roman Catholic mission.

HUDSON'S HOPE—

Outposts from Fort. St. Johns for Hudson's Bay Company, and Revillon's.

FT. GRAHAME—

Hudson's Bay Company post and store.



Edmonton to Finlay River

From Edmonton to Fort St. John by regular transport (see schedule routes 1, 2, 3 and 4). From Fort St. John to Fort Grahame (see route 8), a pack trail has been made by the R.N.W.M.P., as a link in the Peace River-Yukon trail. The trail has been cut out eight feet wide and distance posts erected every two miles. A progress report by Inspector Constantine on the first fifty miles reads:—

"The trail to the Halfway River is now a very good pack trail, the bad spots being corduroyed and hills cut down and many creeks bridged. The train found no difficulty in making fifteen miles a day."

Commissioner A. B. Perry in the report of the R.N.W.M.P. for 1907 says on page 9 *et seq.*:

"On July 19th I left headquarters (Fort Saskatchewan) for the purpose of inspecting the trail. I reached Fort St. John on August 8, 500 miles from Edmonton, having travelled by waggon from Edmonton to Athabasca Landing, thence up the Athabasca River by steamer to Little Slave River, across the portages on foot, by steamboat to Lesser Slave Lake police post, in the saddle to Peace River Crossing, and by steamer up the Peace River. I left St. John, where the trail commences, with a party of four, all told, and ten pack horses, on the 9th of August, and reached Fort Grahame, 208 miles, on August 21st."

"Leaving St. John the trail leads west up the north side of the Peace River (22 miles), turns northwest up the valley of Cache Creek, which it follows for 22 miles,

when it crosses the north branch of the Halfway River. It follows up the main Halfway, now on the bench, now in the valley, to the junction of the Cypress River, 97 miles from St. John. Here it turns westward, going up this valley it enters the mountains at 114 mile post, continues by an easy grade, and crosses the summit of the first range by the Laurier Pass. It now drops rapidly, crosses the Ottetail Creek above the forks, and mounting a low ridge dives into a small valley, and immediately enters the gorge of a small stream coming from the west. This it follows, crossing and recrossing, at times being crowded into the bed of the stream. Leaving this stream on the right it forges steadily westward up and up a thousand feet to the summit (154 miles) of the second range, known as the Devil's Canyon. It soon falls again by the same steep descent into a westward flowing stream, along which it follows, at times disputing the waters for a passage, skirting cutbanks, and climbing over boulders for a mile or more. As it continues down the valley, the going improves until the crossing of the Ospica River (172 miles) is reached, when it forthwith commences a long steady climb to the Herchmer Pass, the summit (180 miles) of the third range. It falls from this summit by an easy grade to Fort Grahame on the Finlay River, 208 miles from Fort St. John."

"I consider this route a very good one, and a waggon road could be constructed over it. It is not practicable for a railroad. I found that a great deal of hard work had been done, and considering that not more than ten months actual work had been put in on 377 miles the

results were satisfactory. A practicable pack trail had been built."

From this description of the route it would not be well to attempt it too early in the season, when the streams would be in spring flood and the snow might linger in the passes. It is suggested that the best time would be on arrival of the steamer at St. John about July 13th. (See Route 4), or the time the Commissioner made the above trip by the next steamer arriving August 6th.

If, as might be advisable, pack horses were secured right in Edmonton or its vicinity, they could be driven light to Fort St. John and the freight sent by the regular transport to meet them at that place. The saving in time and horse flesh would pay the freight. Driving the ponies light, it would take about six weeks to reach Fort St. John from Edmonton, a distance of about 580 miles by the trails, paralleling the water routes as given in the accompanying schedule. Experienced men could save about one hundred miles by the more direct trail, via Lac Ste. Anne, McLeod River, Sturgeon Lake to Dunvegan. After full enquiry, it might be quite safe to postpone the getting of horses until some point nearer Fort St. John is reached, which would still further increase the advantages of this route. Besides the information under the component routes in the schedule, a thorough timetable and tariff from Edmonton to Fort St. John is given under route 8.

An alternative way of making the last part of the journey is also suggested. The Hudson's Bay Company's steamer makes one trip in the season as far as Hudson's

Hope. From here the Rocky Mountain Portage of 12 miles brings one to the Custer House. By taking along a whipsaw, nails, oakum and pitch a boat could be built. At ordinary stages of the water there are no very great difficulties in tracking up the Peace to the Junction of the Finlay and Parsnip, and then up the Finlay to Fort Grahame. This method was adopted by contractors who put in supplies for the police party that was working on the Peace-Yukon trail.

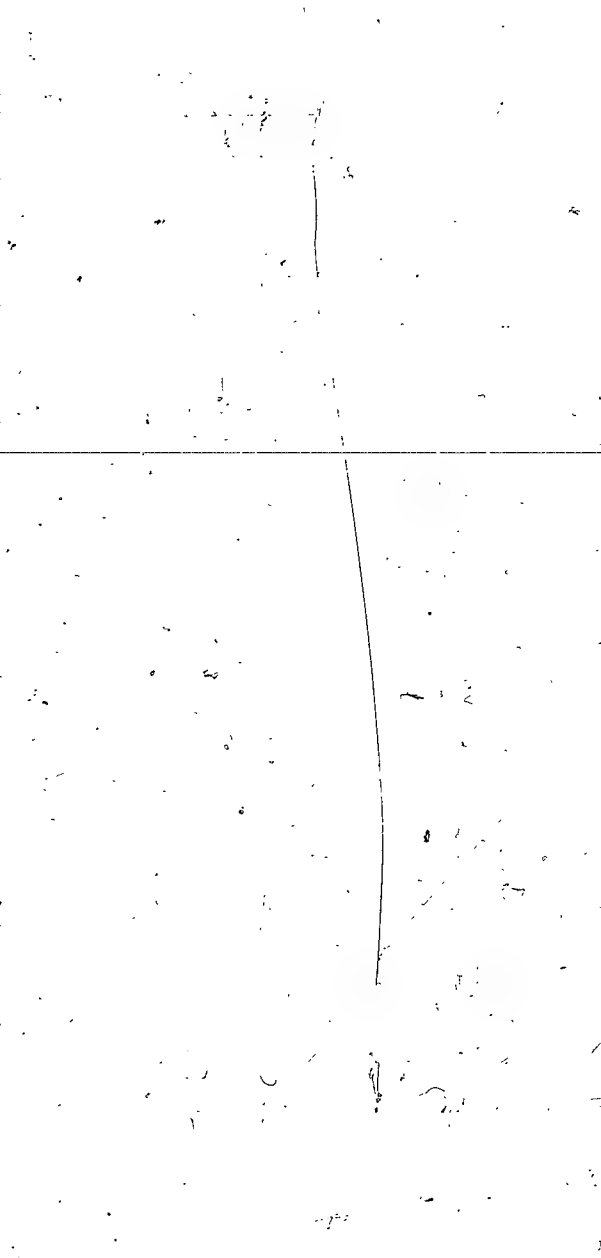
In conclusion, the committee has not made it their business to substantiate or otherwise the reputed gold finds on the Finlay River. Nor do they wish to induce any to take the trip who are inadequately equipped or not physically fit for the necessary work of all back-country travelling. On the other hand transport to the north has become organized to a degree that is not generally recognized. From the routes here reported on novel and interesting holiday trips could be taken. Edmonton merchants and other business men should be alive to their opportunities in this connection.

Respectfully submitted,

H. M. E. EVANS,

J. K. CORNWALL

Edmonton, June 29, 1908.



SCHEDULE OF GOVERNMENT MAIL SERVICE NORTH OF EDMONTON

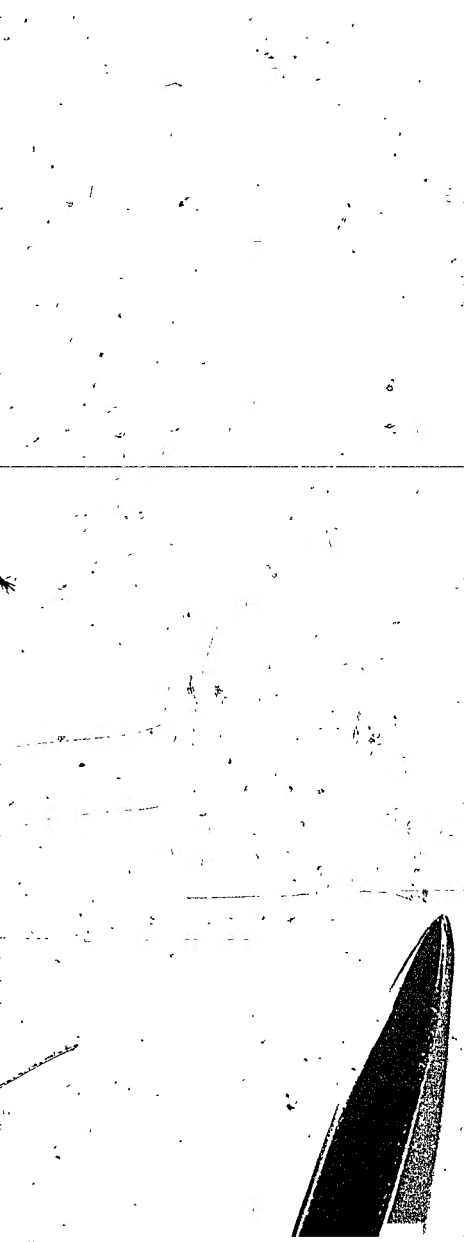
Dist. miles	POST OFFICES	Mode of Conveyance	TIME TABLE.							
0 29 35 44 50 100	Edmonton..... Battensburg..... Fedorah..... Waugh..... Half Way Lake..... Athabasca Landing.....	Stage	Northbound Tuesday 7 a.m.	Outgoing Friday 7 a.m.	Southbound Wednesday 7p.m.	Incoming Saturday 7 p.m.				Service twice a week all the year round.
			Wednesday 7 p.m.	Saturday 7 p.m.	Tuesday 7 a.m.	Wednesday 7 a.m.				
0 126 200 280	Athabasca Landing..... Saw Ridge (East end of Lesser Slave Lake)..... Lesser Slave Lake Settlement..... Peace River Crossing.....	Contractor uses horses or takes steamer according to season and circumstances.	Leaves 15th of the month.		Arrive 14th of month.					Service monthly all the year; no definite schedule laid down for intermediate points; generally two trips at break-up, etc., packed-on-carrier's back.
			Arrives at end of the month.		Leaves the 1st of month.					
0 280	Peace River Crossing..... Vermilion.....	Summer by water. Winter by dog train on Peace riv.	Leaves 1st of month. Arrive middle of the month.		Arrive last of month. Leave middle of month.					Ten round trips a year: one trip missed at break-up and one also missed at freeze-up.
0 60 75	Peace River Crossing..... Dunvegan (not P.O.)..... Spirit River.....	Summer by waggons. Winter by sleighs.	Leave 24th of the month. Arrive 28th of the month.		Arrive 2nd or 3rd of month. Leave 29th of month.					Service monthly all the year round.
0 100 150 352 537 655 849 919 969 1017 1178 1314 1498 1672 1954	Edmonton..... Athabasca Landing (Summer)..... Lac la Biche (winter)..... Fort MacMurray..... Fort Chipewyan..... Fort Smith (P.O.)..... Fort Resolution..... Hay River..... Fort Rae..... Fort Providence..... Fort Simpson..... Fort Wrigley..... Fort Norman..... Fort Good Hope..... Fort Macpherson.....	Winter by dog train from Lac la Biche. Summer, Hudson's Bay Co. are contractors, (See other trans- port for time table.	Out November 29 December 31	Out November 29 No mail for Fort Reso- lution or intermed. points.) Feb. 11, 08, (say 10th to 15th.)	in Feb. 1 Jan. 2	Out Jan. 7 Feb. 7	In Mar. 6 Feb. 10	Out Feb. 7 Mar. 6	In April 3 Mar. 10 Feb. 1	Dates given for winter service via Lac la Biche and dog train couriers. First trip two couriers leave at same time one going as far as Fort Resolution, and the other through to Fort Macpherson. Winter trip reaches Macpherson too late for return till open water, but one mail out via Dawson City by R.N.W.M.P. patrol. Courier from Fort Norman in time to connect at Fort Reso- lution. Summer schedule, see under regular transport.
0 60 120 210	Athabasca Landing..... Calling Lake..... Pelican Portage..... Wabiscaw.....	Authorized but not yet established								Service to be monthly when established.
0 1000	Dawson City..... Fort Macpherson.....	R.N.W.M.P. patrol.	Leave in December.		Arrive back in February.					

Compiled June 29, 1908,

H.M.E. EVANS.

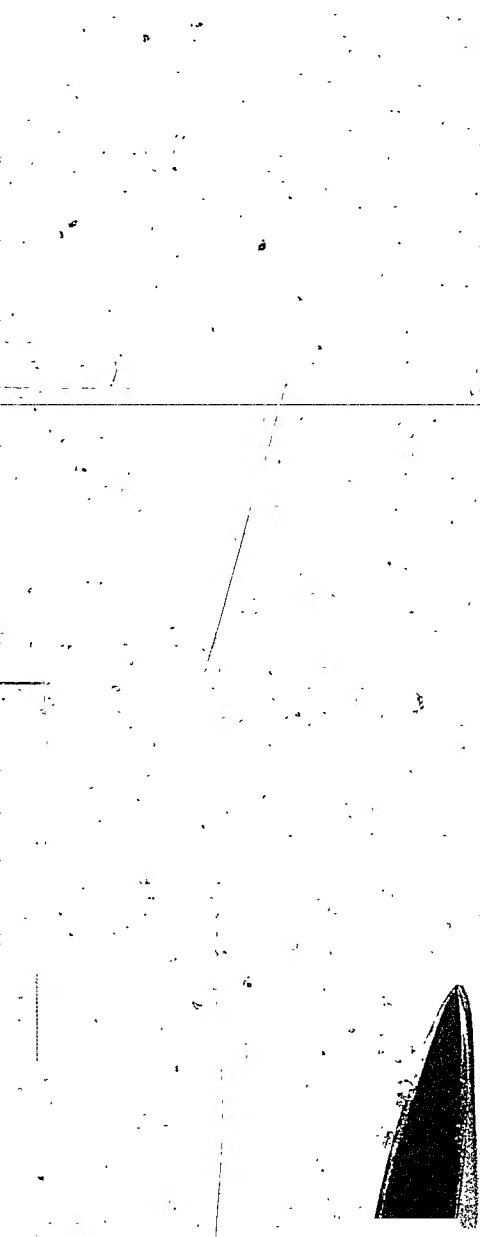
SCHEDULE OF TRANSPORT NORTH OF EDMONTON—SHEET 1

Route No.	Mode of Travel	Dist. in miles.	Points on Route	Passenger Tariff	Freight Tariff per cwt.	TIME TABLE				
1.	Mail stage, gov't road, run by J. M. Kennedy.	0 25 50	Edmonton, Imperial Hotel..... McLean Bros., Sturgeon River..... Eggie's, Two Lakes.....			Northbound Tuesday 8 a.m. Tuesday noon Tuesday eve. Wednesday morn. Wednesday noon Wednesday 6 p.m.	Read down Friday 8 a.m. Friday noon Friday eve. Saturday morn. Saturday noon Saturday 6 p.m.	Southbound Wednesday eve. Wednesday noon Wednesday morn. Tuesday eve. Tuesday noon Tuesday 8 a.m.	Read up Saturday eve. Saturday noon Saturday morn. Friday eve. Friday noon Friday 8 a.m.	Service twice a week all the year. Personal baggage up to 30 lbs. free, excess 5c. a lb. Meals at stopping places 35c each. Beds, 35c.
	Freight Wagons..... Freight Sleighs.....	76 100 100 100	Lewis'..... Athabasca Landing..... Edmonton to Athabasca Landing..... Edmonton to Athabasca Landing.....	\$8.00	\$1.00 .75	3 to 5 days 3 to 4 days				To secure freighters enquire at Hudson's Bay Co., Revillons, Garipey & Lessard, or other general merchants in Edmonton.
2.	Northern Transportation Company, SS Midnight Sun.	0 9 15 25 40 63	Athabasca Landing..... Baptiste Creek..... Michel's..... Bald Hill..... Shaginappi's..... Moose Portage.....			Upstream Wed. eve. (on arrival of stage).	Downstream Friday noon	SS. run from about May 15 to Oct. 15 depending on season.		SS. Midnight Sun, sternwheel river steamer, 120 ft. long by 24 ft. beam; accommodates 35 first class in staterooms; passengers supply their own blankets; meals served 50c each; freight capacity 50 tons; available for job freighting between regular trips.
	Portage 16 miles in Company's passenger and freight waggon.	75	Mouth of Lesser Slave River.....	6.00	.80	Thursday eve Friday morn.	Friday Morn. Thursday eve.	When Midnight Sun makes a trip to Grand Rapids, trip to Lesser Slave River would leave Athabasca Landing Saturday instead of Wednesday.		Edmonton agents of Northern Transportation Company, Alberta Agencies, Ltd., 28 Jasper Ave. East.
	Northern Transportation Company's SS Northern Light.	83 87 91	Caribou Creek..... Donaldson's, Moose River..... Norris' (hd. of raps.), Saulteau Landing.....	8.00	1.40	Friday eve. Saturday morn.	Thursday morn. Wednesday eve.			One day allowed for portage. Government putting wing dams in river which will avoid portage.
	Portage 7 miles to the Settlement.	94 109 126 194 201	Wastia's..... Johnnie Stony's..... Saw Ridge P.O., E. end L. SI. L..... Shaw Point..... Lesser Slave Lake Settlement.....	11.00 16.00	1.75 2.50 add .25	Saturday eve.	Wednesday morn			SS. Northern light, sidewheel river and lake steamer, 100 feet long by 26 ft. beam; accommodates 35 first class in staterooms; passengers supply their own blankets; meals served 50c each; freight capacity 30 tons; between regular runs, makes extra trips for freight and cruises around the lake.
2a.	Sleighs on ice following SS. route.	0 200	Athabasca Landing then same points to Lesser Slave Lake Settlement.....		2.50					Stopping places along routes with good stabling and hay (rarely oats); bunk houses and camping places with stoves; travellers supply own blankets, and generally provisions, although a meal can be obtained. Besides points given on SS route numerous other stopping places 5 to 15 miles apart.
2b.	Waggon road, north side of Athabasca River & nor. side Lesser Slave Lake	0 790 106 216	Ferry at Athabasca Landing..... Mouth of Lesser Slave River..... Norris'..... Lesser Slave Lake Settlement.....							No regular traffic on summer roads but good grass, etc.; make full enquiries at the Landing. South road most used but crossing of Athabasca rather more difficult. Government doing some work on North road
2c.	Waggon road south side Athabasca R. & north side Lesser Slave Lake.	0 65 81 191	Athabasca Landing..... M'th Lesser Slave R., scow across Atha. R..... Norris'..... Lesser Slave Lake Settlement.....							
3.	Waggon road, teams hired for passengers or freight.	0 20 45 60 70 90	Lesser Slave Lake Settlement..... South Heart River..... Bear Head Creek..... Charles Paul's..... Archie's Cappel's..... Peace River Crossing.....	\$10 to \$25 acc. to no.	Summer \$2.00 Winter 1.50					Stopping places at intermediate points as given, with stabling and hay; bunkhouses or accommodation for travellers, who supply their own bedding and provisions. As team and driver must be hired, fare depends on the number of passengers per trip; takes three days in summer, and two days in winter. Passenger with freighter, perhaps \$5.00 for the trip.



SCHEDULE OF TRANSPORT NORTH OF EDMONTON—SHEET 2.

[illegible]



SCHEDULE OF TRANSPORTATION NORTH OF EDMONTON—SHEET 3

RESUME OF ROUTE EDMONTON TO FINLAY RIVER.

Mode of Travel	Dist in miles.	Points on Route	Passenger Tariff		Freight Tariff per cwt.		TIME TABLE							
			Out	in	Out	in	Northbo'd	Southbo'd	Northbound	Southbound	Northbound	Southbound		
	0	Edmonton.....					Lv. May 19	Arr. June 24	Lv. June 23	Arr. Aug. 5	Lv. July 21	Arr. Aug. 26	These dates are for the probable connections in 1908. Trip of July 21 gives hardly enough time for possible delays. Recommend trip leaving Edmonton June 23.	
Route No. 1.....	100	Athabasca Landing.....	\$ 8.00	\$ 8.00	\$1.00	\$1.00	Arr. May 20	Lv. June 23	Arr. June 24	Lv. Aug. 4	Arr. July 22	Lv. Aug. 25		
Route No. 2.....	300	Lesser Slave Lake Settlement.....	24.00	24.00	3.75	3.75	Lv. May 20	Arr. June 19	Lv. June 24	Arr. July 31	Lv. July 22	Arr. Aug. 21		
Route No. 3.....	390	Peace River Crossing.....	{ 34.00 34.00 }		5.75	5.75	Arr. May 23	Lv. June 17	Arr. June 27	Lv. July 29	Arr. July 25	Lv. Aug. 19		
			{ 49.00 49.00 }				Lv. May 25	Arr. June 16	Lv. June 29	Arr. July 23	Lv. July 26	Arr. Aug. 16		
Route No. 4.....	590	Fort St. Johns.....	{ 59.00 49.00 }		8.75	8.00	Arr. May 28	Lv. June 13	Arr. July 2	Lv. July 20	Arr. July 29	Lv. Aug. 13		
			{ 74.00 64.00 }				Lv. May 30	Arr. June 12	Lv. July 6	Arr. July 19	Lv. July 30	Arr. Aug. 12		
Route No. 5.....	798	Fort Grahame.....					Arr. June 6	Lv. June 9	Arr. July 13	Lv. July 16	Arr. Aug. 6	Lv. Aug. 9		